WORKSHOP'S FINEST

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
SHOULD QUICKPLAY RETURN TO TF2 IN 2025?

COMMUNITY

OFFSHORE PROJECT

A TEAM FORTRESS 2 COMMUNITY UPDATE MAKING WAVES

A TF2 NEXUS PUBLICATION—NOT AFFILIATED WITH VALVE SOFTWARE | MAY 2025 ISSUE

https://valvearchive.com/archive/Team%20Fortress/Team%20Fortress%202/Art/Environment%20Art/Desert/ - deserttower.jpg

The Workshop's Finest (WF) Magazine is a monthly publication by the TF2 Nexus group, dedicated to showcasing the TF2 community's Workshop creations, recent TF2 news, guides, and player opinions. This non-profit publication is run entirely by volunteers from the TF2 Nexus team. We are not affiliated with Valve Software—this magazine is a community-driven project.

IN THIS ISSUE...

ISSUE II • MAY 2025

TF2 NEXUS

FEATURES

The Offshore Community Project: A Team Fortress 2 Community Update Making Waves

Cover Story | Article by Alex (Slippi) | Interviewed by SimplyKat*

Workshop's Finest Picks of May 2025

Cosmetics, Maps, Weapons, Taunts, War Paints, and Unusuals

Evolution of The Demoman

From Publically Released Concept Art of TF2

ARTICLES

Editorial: The Growing Negligence of VALVE towards their Games

By Military Snake

OAT: Surprisingly, Complaining Works!

By SimplyKat*

OAT: "My Opinions and Takes on the Trading Scene of TF2"

By Nothin But Death

RN: Guidelines for Creating Immersive Cosmetics, Taunts, and Unusuals

By Endi

COMMUNITY

ATC: Should Quickplay return to TF2 in 2025?

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
SimplyKat*

EDITOR
Military Snake

WRITERS
Froot Loops · Xob
Alex (Slippi) · Nothin But Death

ARTISTS
KayEF · Potat Master

ENVIRONMENT PHOTOGRAPHER
Captain Sandvich II

ITEM QUALITY CONTROL
Endi

THE ISSUE'S COVER
Illustration by KayEF · "Offshore Community Project" logo courtesy of Operabay

A TEAM FORTRESS 2 COMMUNITY UPDATE MAKING WAVES

Cover Story | Article by Alex (Slippi) | Interviewed by SimplyKat*

The Team Fortress 2 community has always put together unofficial updates to hopefully be plugged into the game. The Offshore Community Project is one of those unofficial update projects created by members of the community. We at the *Workshop's Finest* magazine decided to conduct an interview with two of the major contributors on this project. If you happen to be out of the loop, the Offshore Community Project is a community effort to make an update for Team Fortress 2. This update includes cosmetics, maps, weapons, war paints, and more, along with an SFM short made by the its members.

This update has a theme of sea and oil rigs, with any of the new content being made for this project fitting both TF2's lore and setting along with the intended them of this community update. We decided to interview Operabay, the project's Main Director and AltraNade, the project's Animation Supervisor about their roles in this project's rollout and the development of this community effort.

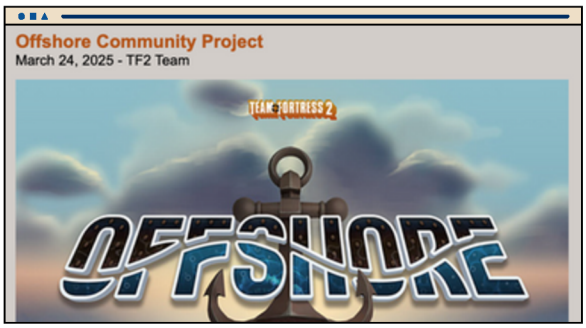
How the idea for Offshore come about

For Operabay, the idea for Offshore came after their previous work on Tropic Crisis, another community TF2 project. They noticed a gap in the game's content because underwater-themed maps were nearly nonexistent. That absence became the inspiration for a new community update, one that would focus on the ocean while staying firmly grounded in Team Fortress 2's established lore and art direction.

"The main goal of the project," Opera explained, "is to bring the community together to create workshop items based around the sea, while ensuring everything stays true to TF2's lore and time period, so it doesn't feel out of place."

In keeping with that inclusive spirit, Offshore is open to anyone willing to contribute. Operabay emphasized the simplicity of getting involved: "Just join the Offshore Discord server ..., start making workshop items that match the theme and add the custom border to your item. That's all you need to do to be part of the project!"

This approach has attracted both seasoned veterans of the workshop scene and fresh faces, especially after Valve acknowledged the project in a blog post on the official website. The resulting boost in attention led to a wave of new submissions and an energized creative scene.



Animating the Ocean

On the animation front, AltraNade has led the charge. As the project's animation supervisor, he described a number of hurdles unique to working with Source Filmmaker (SFM), especially when trying to maintain consistency across multiple animators.

"The trailer has taken up a large portion of each animator's time, so we haven't had the time to really work on taunts" AltraNade said. The trailer is still being worked on as of the interview.

Altra mentioned that they got two taunts cooking for the project (as of writing this article). Both taunts are being worked on by TheHypedScoot and him. Hyped is working on blocking the keyposes out, like in stop motion, while Altra is splining them to look smooth by manipulating animation curves. Bengali Hedgehog is doing the modelling work for a fishing taunt that Altra says "I'm sure you will all enjoy."

One major technical challenge was animating walk and run cycles. To address this, AltraNade created custom footroll attachments for each mercenary, giving animators more precise control over foot movements. "I released the addon publicly on the SFM *[steam]* workshop for everyone to use and people seem to really like it!" Altra added.

But not all scenes were smooth sailing. Some animation shots were so rough that they had to be redone entirely. "Sometimes an animation is too far gone and I have to start clean with the old animation as reference. There were a couple of shots I had to do that with," Altra admitted, "but it was worth it to get the consistent quality I'm looking for."

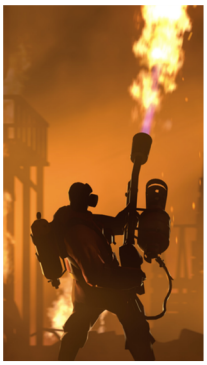
Limited Resources but Big Ideas

Despite the project's ambitious goals, not every idea could make it in. AltraNade mentioned that one of his biggest regrets was the lack of marine life in the final content pool. "I personally would have

really loved to see whales, but the most I could do at the time was model a dolphin for some maps," he said. Most of the modeling work in that area fell to just two people, including Dansky, who is busy making cosmetics. Dansky worked on making the fish models for the Pressure and Aquaris maps.

The Challenges of TF2's Animation Style

Animating for Team Fortress 2 presents its own unique set of challenges, especially when it comes to tone. "I think the biggest struggle is trying to restrain yourself from animating too over the top, but also not going to*[o]* realistic with the movement. You need to strike that perfect balance to match the character models, as they are a mix of both cartoony and realistic." AltraNade explained. "When I animate, I watch the official Valve TF2 animations for inspiration, which helps me stay true to the animation style they've established."



Community Feedback

Both contributors were honest about the project's missteps. One of the biggest issues was the project's timing. "We announced the project far too late imo and didn't have a ready asset pack for mappers when we launched publicly, which was a mistake," AltraNade said. "I think if we had sunk more time into creating assets early on, we could have announced the project earlier and made life a lot easier for the workshoppers in the community."

Operabay agreed, noting that the team initially linked to

existing workshop Discord servers rather than creating their own. “Another feedback we received was the suggestion to create our own Discord server, rather than linking to preexisting workshop servers on the community callout website, which caused confusion for many participants.” This was soon resolved and the project has its own Discord server where you can join now.

From ambitious SFM work to a full suite of community-made items, the Offshore Community Project represents a powerful example of what TF2 fans can accomplish together.

Despite hurdles in coordination, timing, and workload, the project’s contributors remain dedicated to delivering a polished, lore-friendly, and visually consistent update. With the project’s workshop collection released, and Valve already acknowledging their efforts, the Offshore Project team is making a real splash not just in the TF2 Workshop scene but in the entire community as a whole.

Thank you to Operabay and Altranade for giving us a glimpse of the behind the scenes of the Offshore Community Project. We at *TF2 Nexus* and the *Workshop’s Finest* magazine wish them the best and hope that they continue to publish quality workshop content for the game.

offshore.teamfortress.community

.gg/PnXbEqxfZK

Cosmetics

MAY 2025

WORKSHOP'S FINEST

WORKSHOP PICKS

“Wader's Wardrobe” Set

Class: Engineer
Item Slot: Headgear, Misc
Other: Certified Compatible, Summer
By Sam D. Wich

"Skyline Bombardier" Set

Class: Demoman
Item Slot: Headgear, Misc
Other: Halloween, Smissmas, Summer
By Games and Artur E.

“The Biop-Sea” Set

Class: Medic
Item Slot: Headgear, Misc
Other: Certified Compatible, Summer
By Papyesh and Tomboy Shirogane

Picks From the *Offshore Cosmetic collection*

Maps
MAY 2025

WORKSHOP'S FINEST
WORKSHOP PICKS

pl_Aquarius

"Located on a coral reef in the Caribbean, it is our own frontier of research and discovery. Your journey will take you through this beautiful coral reef community, rich in marine life. The spirit of adventure is alive and well down here."

ctf_Pressure

"RED and BLU have discovered the legendary Megalodon being still alive, as well the location where he hangs out the most, now having their differences... RED wants to kill the beast, to gain a boost from the press about their company, promoting them also as good hunters, while BLU wants to use it as their main attraction for their exclusive acquarium!"

Offshore Summer Contracts

"A set of 64 custom contracts designed to refresh your TF2 experience. From class challenges to map-specific tasks, there's something for every kind of merc. Grab your ConTracker and dive in! There's loot on the horizon."

Picks From the *Offshore Map & ConTracker collection*

Weapons
MAY 2025

WORKSHOP'S FINEST
WORKSHOP PICKS

Gil Cutter
Class: Spy
Item Slot: Weapon (Melee)
Other: Jungle, Summer
By Jacov

The Spearfisher
Class: Sniper
Item Slot: Weapon (Primary)
By Haau, cranjus mcbasketball, and Overlord Lettuce

The Hell Beneath
Class: Demoman
Item Slot: Weapon (Secondary)
By Haau, cranjus mcbasketball, and Overlord Lettuce

Picks From the *Offshore Weapon collection*

Taunts
MAY 2025

WORKSHOP'S FINEST
WORKSHOP PICKS

Flying Colors
Type: All-class Taunt
Other: Certified Compatible, Summer
By Grambee, Big Bob, and Square

Bear Hug
Type: Partner Taunt
Class: Heavy
Other: Certified Compatible, Summer
By Kylul, Setry, and Tabby

Healthcare Hog
Type: Class-specific Taunt
Class: Scout
Other: Certified Compatible, Summer
By Kylul

War Paints

MAY 2025

WORKSHOP'S FINEST

WORKSHOP PICKS

Submarinal Air Strike

By DudeTheNinja

Macchi Machined

By KayEf

Anchor Armed

By fantach ᗱ

Picks From the *Offshore War Paint collection*

Unusuals
MAY 2025

WORKSHOP'S FINEST
WORKSHOP PICKS

Diver's Dream
By LLaigend and Mbarthemuel

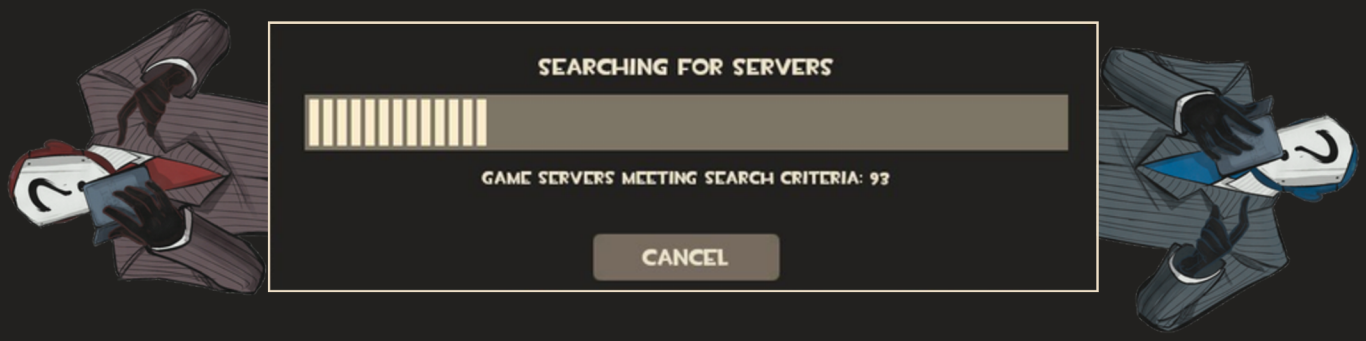
Lighthouse Haze
By ImAware, Lubbychudder, Phe, and Enigmus

Seabeams
By Cipherlock and Phe

Picks From the *Offshore Cosmetic collection*

ASK THE COMMUNITY:

SHOULD QUICKPLAY RETURN TO TF2 IN 2025?



Since the Meet Your Match update in 2016, the Team Fortress 2 community has remained divided over one key issue: the best way to connect to vanilla TF2 servers. The removal of the classic Quickplay system in favor of Casual matchmaking sparked debates that never fully settled. Now, following Valve's recent response to the UnmuteF2Ps open letter and movement, the old argument has resurfaced, this time louder than ever.

Some players are calling for a full return of Quickplay, Others advocate for improvements to the existing Casual mode, while a portion of the community feels that bringing back Quickplay in its original form would be a step backward.

To capture the pulse of the community, we at the *TF2 Nexus* and *Workshop's Finest Magazine* team, along with the organizers of the UnmuteF2Ps movement reached out to players across multiple platforms.

"I believe Quickplay is much better than Casual, even though I haven't had the chance to experience it myself. It offered many more features, such as vote scramble, team switching, auto scramble, and more. It also allowed players to connect to both community servers and Valve servers through the server browser. The only downside would be the loss of parties, but I think that's a fair trade-off if it means bringing back all the good features."

—Nothin But Death

“I was never truly there for quickplay, but looking at it from a game dev point of view I can understand why casual matchmaking is better. With most modern casual gamers, a lot want quick action and to have an experience tailored for hopping on, playing a couple rounds, then logging off. While quickplay can achieve this, I think the lack of consistency and stability on the part of communications servers has Valve a bit skeptic on whether it's a good first impression for new players. Additionally most Multiplayer games are becoming hotspots for friends to play long distance. While also possible if you tell your friends the server ip address, it's much less convenient to play with your friends with the lack of a party. I think Valve implementing parties was a good move that mirrors games like CS2 or Fortnite with how they've becoming even bigger due to casual players being able to play together easily. So for TF2, these are things that make casual matchmaking a much more desirable experience for easing new players in than quickplay. Quickplay was a system that worked, but worked in a different era of gaming. TF2 is a game older than it's player base, and just like how a game like World of Tanks needs to adjust the speed of the game to fit the new generation, TF2 needed to adapt to fit the new era of matchmaking and Multiplayer.

Now, do I like how they've handled community servers in this time? NO, there is more they could to make it feel on par with casual. I think main thing being they make a dedicated menu for community server shenanigans and locate that tab underneath the casual tab. To be fair the TF2 side menu is kinda poor to navigate anyways, but I feel easing up the amount of options on screen and treating it akin to Smash Bros. With it's menus and sub-menus would help to make players explore more and discover the community tab and look through the server browser or make their own. Additionally it may be good to update the old Half-Life 2/Steam server browser to live up to modern standards as what turns players away is the small text and lack of previews making them question what they're joining into. So overall, I feel casual matchmaking is better for the game, but there's is more they can do for community servers instead.“

—Seacat08

“Yes definitely, even though I never got to experience it myself I've heard stories of so many different community servers lose their playerbase and shut down as soon as quickplay was removed. Reimplementing quickplay would not only reintroduce the casual playerbase back into community servers but would also help make matches more fun and satisfying.”

—BigBoiGames

"Short answer: yes, quickplay should be brought back immediately.

Long answer: I think most TF2 players, even those that started playing well after Meet Your Match, understand that casual mode is broken at some level. Consistently unbalanced games with 12v7s as players bleed off the losing team. An endless cycle of 2-5 minute stomps. Constantly requeuing to find that one game that lasts more than 10 minutes—which is usually on a payload or multistage map. Getting tossed into games right before they end. Broken map votes, glitchy set up timers, barely functioning autobalance, a 30 second map vote at the end of the game that makes everyone leave. The symptoms are all there, we all FEEL that something is wrong.

Anyone who played TF2 prior to Meet Your Match knows that this was ***not*** *how the game always functioned. Team Fortress 2 is an old game, it released in 2007. It was not designed for a skill-based matchmaking system, and functioned beautifully without one via quickplay, with all of its features and freedoms. However, more than 50% of the playerbase today never experienced quickplay. Many are hesitant to support a system they're unfamiliar with, and there's been a lot of misinformation circulating about its functionality. A bit of research will clear up misconceptions, but I believe we all want the same thing here. We want to fix casual mode or bring back quickplay- these are basically the same thing. Bringing back quickplay is not asking for the removal of the few genuinely beneficial features Valve added after Meet Your Match—like ping filters, the map selection menu, and the ability to que from anywhere in the game. Bringing back quickplay is asking for the removal of matchmaking system (which is in the most literal sense, broken, and has failed to its job since day one of its implementation), and re-implementing all of the features and freedoms quickplay had that Valve needlessly took away in their botched attempt to "modernize" TF2 for competitive play, which it was not designed for:*

Votescrambles, autoscrambles, longer round timers, the in-game map vote that doesn't waste a players time, ad hoc connections to valve servers, putting valve servers back into the server browser, bringing back the advanced options search so players can incorporate community servers into their game search, if desired... to name the biggest changes we need.

We ultimately all want the same thing—taking the 95% of what was good from quickplay, the 5% that casual mode got right, and putting those two things together. This would do nothing but drastically improve the overall quality of every single TF2 fan's playtime, and there is no serious argument in favor of the contrary."

—Zesty Jesus

“Bring back everything from Quickplay but keep the flare, bells and whistles of Casual. Quickplay is significantly healthier for the game, but I also like my badge. It doesn't have to do anything, and it should have no effect on where the game sends you. It'd just be a neat feature for fun.“

—u/insanity10k

“Quickplay is so much more freeing with the options, casual is backwards to how tf2 was even supposed to be played, its literally a broken system at times. Quickplay is infinitely better, you dont have to even requeue after a game ends, the only thing you'd lose is the spinning badge lol. Though they'd probably just add that in the corner anyway. That and the ability to look in your backpack while searching, but quickplay is almost instant anyway unlike casual. And no, its not just server settings that people want back”

—u/Medi_Gun

Some members of the TF2 Community are also calling for a new hashtag or movement about bringing back Quickplay to TF2. With Megascatterbomb’s deeper survey regarding this topic (check page 18), we’ll see the position of the majority of the TF2 Community regarding this issue. Until then, let’s not dive into useless fights and debates but healthy discussions regarding this topic is encouraged.

The Growing Negligence of VALVE towards their Games

By Military Snake

It is an understood responsibility in life to maintain that which you build. Construction workers must, every now and again, maintain the buildings and roads that they made. It would seem self-evident that things should stay functioning for as long as possible for the sake of efficiency and ease of use. In regard to video games, we live in a time where games can benefit from maintenance with the live service method. Games can now be serviced for bugs, glitches, and other troubling problems by developers updating the game in real time, allowing for as high-functioning of an experience as possible for the players.

The Valve Corporation, however, tends to take that ideology and throw it out the window. Once upon a time, they would maintain all their games through live service quite actively. At one point, they had to modify the Source engine itself due to bugs that were found in older speedruns of Half-Life 2 that affected the physics of the game and the scripting interactions with NPCs. But such responsibility is not their priority any longer, and a lot of people wonder why.

Valve has been occupied with Steam for many years now. Steam is the largest video game distribution platform in the world, making tens of billions of dollars per year. When Steam rose to such prominence, Valve stopped being the game company that they started as. Their focus shifted to further promulgation and maintenance of Steam as well as hardware products. The Steam Deck is a handheld gaming device that can not only play a person's entire Steam library but also emulate most games in existence from almost any console a person desires. And all the franchises they created are simply left behind as a result of their shift in focus.

Half-Life was Valve's first masterpiece franchise, telling an engaging story while providing an incredible spin on the first-person shooter genre. Yet after several entries into the series, they stopped producing games to finish the story. There is no Half-Life 2: Episode 3, and there is no Half-Life 3, and there may never be. The reason for this is stubbornness. The choice was made at one point to focus on other projects, and when Valve returned to the concept, the people in charge simply could not be bothered to

produce a game that finished the story. It was not only selfishness that prevented the conclusion to the Half-Life universe to be achieved – it was pure laziness. Valve could have produced an excellent story and game if they so desired, as they had maintained an excellent reputation as game developers. They simply chose not to.

Portal is another franchise that, while inherently open-ended, could deserve better treatment from Valve. A third Portal game would have been excellent to experience, considering how well Portal 2 built off the first game. The same issue plagues Left 4 Dead, the zombie franchise of Valve. Only two games were ever made in the franchise, and while there were reports of a third game being created a long time ago, the consensus is that such a project was cancelled. In Left 4 Dead 2's multiplayer scenes, the servers possess problems where the A.I. cannot function intelligently whatsoever without the use of improved tools. As far back as a year ago, L4D2's multiplayer servers were constantly receiving DDoS attacks as well. While Valve appears to have tried solving the problem, there are still reports that show they still happen quite frequently. Though, of course, Valve has not communicated whatsoever about addressing these particular problems.

The *Team Fortress* franchise is a perfect example of how to treat a game well, then trash it and never speak again. The most recent game in the franchise, Team Fortress 2, used to be highly regarded and properly treated by Valve. It was the game that started and pioneered the concept of a real-world monetary marketplace surrounding in-game items. Yet updates started deteriorating in quality, eventually culminating in the implementation of a matchmaking system that allowed cheater bots to spread through the official Valve servers of the game's base method of play, Casual. It took Valve nine years to fix the problem after multiple petitions from the fanbase, and only now is the game confirmed to be somewhat playable in its base state again.

Counter-Strike is also persistently abused by neglect. In the most recent years, Valve overhauled Counter-Strike: Global Offense to port it to the all-new Source 2 engine. The physics are similar and the most significant changes are lighting and some interactions with objects. And after porting CS:GO to Source 2 and renaming the game CS2, Valve almost immediately went radio silent. Occasionally, new maps were put into the game, but Counter-Strike has had its own cheater problem for a long time, and it is more exasperated than ever in CS2, which Valve also has not communicated about fixing.

Part of the common theme about Valve's neglect of their games is silence. They do not communicate

about what they do behind the scenes in regard to new products or maintaining their games. Even their most popular games do not get the treatment they need to function at the highest level possible. Valve is a testament to the level of irresponsibility a company can possess towards the very products they continue to sell and advertise as still functioning. Valve's tale is one of utter disappointment, once standing so tall as a game company that produced consistently excellent titles without a bad one among them, and now are a game hosting and services company that may occasionally make a game if their supporters are lucky enough.

Military Snake

WF Magazine Editor

Where Do YOU Stand?

With the recent discussions on *Quickplay* and *Casual Mode*, content creator Megascatterbomb is gathering opinions through a short survey to help shape an upcoming in-depth video on the topic.

TAKE THE SURVEY HERE

forms.gle/cRHV6dQYoFCLcv3LA

"I'm surveying the TF2 community on quickplay and casual, covering both broad opinions and individual features. This will inform an upcoming video covering the topic in detail. Please take the time to answer the survey, it shouldn't take more than 5 or 10 minutes"

—Megascatterbomb

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DEMOMAN

Images from:
https://valvearchive.com/archive/Team%20Fortress/Team%20Fortress%202/Art/Character%20Art/Demoman/

Surprisingly, Complaining Works!

By SimplyKat*

In the last issue of this magazine, we talked about the ongoing UnmuteF2Ps movement and its open letter to VALVE. Well, it's now May and something unexpected happened. VALVE actually responded... sort of.

On May 12–13, 2025, TF2 received patches that lifted some of the communication restrictions placed on Free-to-Play (F2P) players. These updates restored access to voice commands and party chat (via the "P" key, though it was still accessible through the menu). While not a full-on unmute on text/voice chat, this is still a huge win for the community.

I was one of the organizers and the main author of the open letter for UnmuteF2Ps and when I heard the news after I woke up I was stunned, shocked even, that VALVE, a multi-billion gaming company, actually listened to the complaints of the Team Fortress 2 Community. Obviously, I was ecstatic when I heard the news and spread the news around.

This decision by VALVE proves that the skeptics were wrong. The ones who dismissed the movement as "pointless noise" underestimated the power of a unified community. It's a reminder that well-reasoned, collective feedback can lead to real change and that constructive complaints should never be discouraged, especially when they're rooted in genuine concern.

On May 15, YouTuber Zesty Jesus released a video titled "TF2: Valve Finally Unmuted Free 2 Plays (Mostly)," where he recapped what had happened and even gave us, the organizers, a kind shout-out. But what really caught my attention was something he said toward the end: he pointed out that VALVE's willingness to roll back some of the game's removed features could mean they're open to even more changes. Specifically, he called on the TF2 community to push for the return of Quickplay as a way to improve Casual mode.

With this statement of his, that got me thinking, "Should we actually do this?" And then I talked to a few more community members about it and I decided to create a short survey across different platforms that I have, Twitter (follow @katamiphi), three Discord servers that I own, and one of the organizers of the UnmuteF2Ps movement made a poll on r/TF2. The survey got over 1,328 participants (including

reddit) and it shows that the overwhelming majority of the playerbase either wants to bring Quickplay back with all of its features pre-Meet Your Match (which got over 47.70%) or bringing Quickplay back with some fixes/reforms (31.30%). Those who don't want Quickplay to return were the minority with 12.70% of the votes, while those who haven't decided yet where the 8.20%.

While encouraging, I recognize the survey that I made may be biased. Thankfully, a more in-depth survey is currently circulating, created by Megascatterbomb for an upcoming video on the subject.

Some are calling for another protest in the same level of FixTF2 or UnmuteF2Ps for bringing back Quickplay. Personally, I don't think we need another full-scale protest. A well-written letter might be enough to prompt Valve into action. But if the community decides otherwise, so be it. If it comes to that, I'd even suggest we adopt the color yellow for the movement which is a nod to the 1986 Philippine People Power Revolution, a peaceful movement driven by unity and conviction.

So, I want you, the reader, to please take a few minutes to complete Megascatterbomb's survey, linked via the QR code found on the last page of Military Snake's editorial. Your voice matters, and together, we might just make history again.

SimplyKat*
WF Magazine Editor-in-chief
(no, I'm not G-Dragon LOL)

"My Opinions and Takes on the Trading Scene of TF2"

By Nothin But Death

If you've played Team Fortress 2 for a while, you probably know about the trading side of the game. Most normal players like myself have used trading sites like Backpack.tf or Scrap.tf to buy items like hats, taunts, etc. It's the most convenient way to buy and sell items, but sadly, it's not all good. The main issues I have with the trading side of TF2 are:

- The overly-priced items that most normal players would never afford during their time playing the game unless they grinded for years instead of having fun playing the game it's meant for.
- The monopoly that the people behind sites like Backpack.tf, Scrap.tf, and Marketplace.tf have over TF2 trading.

I won't get into the many disgusting and outright foul things the devs and mods of these sites have done, but there are plenty of videos on YouTube that cover it.

Another big issue is the hyperinflation of keys and certain items, alongside the complete devaluation of refined metal. In the old days of trading, it was super simple! Keys were 3 refined each, and Earbuds were 5 keys. But now, after the crash of Earbuds as a currency, keys and refined are the only forms of currency left that still use TF2 items. Many items, such as Unusuals, have skyrocketed in price over the past few years.

Of course, we still get new hats and effects every year from Valve, but their quality has also decreased—and sometimes we get more effects than hats!

But TF2 trading has led to some good things as well. It's not all bad. Trade servers have made countless memories for lots of people and even had real-world impacts!

TF2 wouldn't be the game it is today if trading didn't exist and bring so many things with it, whether good or bad. It's impacted the game for better or worse, but it's here to stay. Traders will keep buying keys from Valve, who will keep giving us the bare minimum. Thank you for your time, whether you read this all or just skimmed through. Either way, I'll see you next issue.

Nothin But Death
WF Magazine Writer

LEVEL DESIGN PROFILE:
GRANARY
CONTROL POINT

Map Overview
- Type: Control Point (CP)
- Setting: Large grain factory/shipping complex in a rural area.
- Hazards: Drowning in deep water
- Pyrovision Support: Yes

Layout and Key Areas
Control Points 1 & 5 (Final Points)
- Location: Situated just outside each team's spawn area.

Features:
- Yard: An open area with a control point, offering multiple access routes.
- Pipes: Two pipes, referred to as "low pipe" and "high pipe," provide elevated pathways over the yard.
- House: A small structure connecting to the second floor of the building housing Control Points 2 & 4.

Tactical Notes: The open yard allows for various defensive setups, while the pipes offer flanking opportunities.

Control Points 2 & 4 (Second Points)
- Location: Enclosed within the main granary mills between the yard and the final control point.

Features:
- Left and Right Yards: Open areas with multiple entrances to the control point building.
- Z-Connector: A small corridor providing an alternative route to the point.
- Garage: Connects the yard to the control point area, featuring a second-level walkway.
- Grain Chute: An enclosed chute leading directly to the ramp room near the point.
- Forward Spawn: Activated when a team controls the central control point, allowing quicker reinforcement.

Tactical Notes: The multiple entry points and verticality make these areas prone to intense firefights and strategic plays.

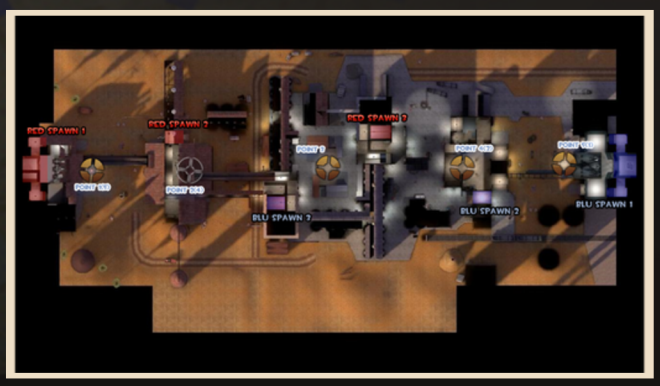
Control Point 3 (Mid Point)
- Location: The central area of the map.

Features:
- Crates: Stacked cargo containers providing cover and elevation.
- Catwalks: Overhead walkways offering vantage points over the point.
- Garage: Main entrance to the mid area, leading directly to the point.
- Choke: A narrow entrance often contested during mid-fights.

Tactical Notes: Control of the crates and catwalks is crucial for dominance in mid-fights.

Objective
- In Granary, each team aims to capture all five control points in sequence. Initially, only the central point is unlocked. Capturing it unlocks the next enemy point, allowing for progression. The map's symmetrical design ensures balanced opportunities for both teams.

Fun Fact
- Meet The Soldier takes place in a modified version of the map. To give tribute to Soldier's VA, the late Rick May, there is a Soldier statue at the right side of the out of bounds area near RED's spawn, along with multiple severed heads as seen in the short.



Guidelines for Creating Immersive Cosmetics, Taunts, and Unusuals

By Endi

When designing cosmetics, taunts, or unusuals for the game, it's essential to maintain the balance between creativity and the established aesthetic of the world. Whether crafting a worn-out, character-driven cosmetic or a taunt that captures the essence of a character's personality, every detail must align with the game's tone and fast-paced nature. The following guidelines offer a structured approach to creating elements that fit seamlessly into the game, ensuring they are both visually appealing and true to the unique atmosphere the game has cultivated.

For Cosmetics:

- Research and understand the stylistic differences of the Mercs and the game.
- Remember to keep the colours toned down and washed out—make them look used and worn down most of the time.
- Humorous cosmetics can be fun, but they shouldn't be overly silly. They must remain subtle and fit the game's style of humor—not the other way around. Check Demo's Eye photo and Pony Heads for better references.
- The best way to evaluate whether your cosmetic works is by using the following criteria:
    - Theme
    - Character
    - Direction
    - Loadout Compatibility
    - Texture Work

The more your cosmetic aligns with this criteria, the better it will be.

For Taunts:

- Study how the characters already act in-game. Imagine them performing the taunt you have in mind—if you can see their personality coming through in the action, you've got a good taunt (and vice versa).
- ALWAYS keep the taunt 4–5 seconds long to maintain the game's fast pacing. (Unless looped)
- Don't over-exaggerate the reactions—keep them expressive but not cartoony. Observe how the characters behave in their built-in taunts for reference.

For Unusuals:

- In general, keep them simple but not boring. Burning Flames is just fire, yet it looks badass.
- Don't create 10 different versions of the same effect—2 or 3 are enough, as long as each brings something new to the table.

JOIN TF2 NEXUS!

Brought to you by the TF2 Players, for the TF2 Players.

The TF2 Nexus is THE place for TF2 Community Members who are interested in making content for the game to gather, create ideas, and share their creations with others.

Workshoppers, artists, or just ordinary players are all welcome here!

TF2 NEXUS

@TF2Nexus

.gg/FpHdrG3hcz

WORKSHOP'S FINEST

IS LOOKING FOR MORE VOLUNTEERS!

Are you passionate about the arts, storytelling, or journalism? We're seeking dedicated volunteers to help bring our next "Workshop's Finest" magazine issue to life, and we want YOU to be part of the team!

We're specifically looking for volunteers in the following roles:

- **Artists (2D/3D)**

Whether you specialize in Source Filmmaker, Blender, or 2D art, we need your creativity to bring our vision to life. Help us illustrate stories, create stunning visuals, and design layouts that captivate our audience.

- **Writers**

Are you a wordsmith with a flair for storytelling? We need writers who can craft compelling articles, features, and creative pieces that showcase the heart of the TF2 community and beyond.

- **Journalists**

Have a nose for news and a passion for investigating the truth? We're looking for journalists who can cover current events, write in-depth features, and provide thoughtful commentary on issues that matter.

What's in it for you?

If you join the WF Magazine team, you can build your creative portfolio with published work in each issue, Collaborate with a talented team of artists, writers, and editors, and gain experience in magazine production.

How to apply?

Fill out the form below and let us know which role you're interested in. We'll reach out to you with more details. Let's make something incredible together.

https://forms.gle/YsQWbgdjXq25Nqmy5

You can submit stuff for the Magazine!

Whether you're a veteran, F2P, or someone who wants to share tips for the workshop, here's your chance to have your voice heard in the *Workshop's Finest* magazine! We're accepting submissions for our "*Opinions and Takes*" and "*Random Notes*" sections.

Submission Guidelines:

1. All submissions must be original.
2. Off-topic submissions will not be accepted.
3. Submissions must be submitted on the #wf-articles-notes Forum Channel on the TF2 Nexus Discord.
4. **Opinions and Takes**: Articles should be between 500–1,200 words and must be about TF2-related topics.
5. **Random Notes**: Entries should be no longer than 40 lines and must be related to the TF2 Workshop.
6. Don't forget to select the appropriate tags for your article.

Whether you want to share workshop tips or discuss community trends, we want to hear from YOU!